

VI. Concepts About Books and Print for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Teach Helpful or Appropriate Behavior: *Teach children behaviors that will help them the most. (Ex: How to ask for something; how to listen and not interrupt; how to join a group; how to complete work and put things away; skills for participating in a group; mealtime manners; how to wash hands properly.)*

Set Up Practice Sessions and Give “On-the-Spot” Guidance: *Give children a chance to practice what you tell them; provide guidance to practice.*

Young children need adult help with the words to use in social situations. For example:

- When you want a toy someone else has you can say: “Will you give me that truck when you finish with it?”
- When you want to join a group of children playing a game you can say: “May I play, too?”

We often hear that children should know how to behave – if parents would only teach this at home! But, how do I learn skills for participating in a group if I’m the only kid at my house or if it’s only my brother and me? It isn’t going to happen unless we take the time in group settings to teach the behaviors we expect.

It is important, also, to provide opportunities for children to practice the skills we teach while we are nearby and can provide assistance as needed. Mastering these skills takes time – and adults must be available to guide the process. So, encourage participants to observe and be ready to give assistance so that children experience success in their efforts.